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UNCLAS KINGSTON 000465

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INL/LP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: JAMAICA COAST GUARD INAUGURATES NEW FACILITY

1. In a brief ceremony on 16 February, attended by the top officials in the Jamaican security establishment, the Jamaica Defense Force Coast Guard (JDFCG) dedicated a new station at Black River on the southwest coast of Jamaica. This facility will be manned by both the JDFCG and a contingent of the JCF Marine Police, with responsibility for maritime law enforcement and search and rescue in a region suspected of being a major artery for drug trafficking from South America to the U.S. The attendees included the Minister of National Security, Chief of Staff, Jamaica Defense Force (JDF), Commissioner, Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), Charge' D'Affaires, U.S. Embassy Kingston as well as other U.S. Embassy, JDF and JCF staff and Jamaican press officials.

2. According to the Minister of National Security, the principal speaker at the event, this facility is the first of its kind on the south coast and will compliment the Government of Jamaica's efforts at Pedro Cay, some 60 nautical miles to the south of Jamaica. A planned station was destroyed during Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 thus delaying the process. The facility, located on privately owned property on the southernmost point in Black River, was made available by a prominent Jamaican businessman from the area. The actual structure, a 40 foot container-shaped, prefabricated building, was made possible by a joint USG effort with funding from the Narcotics Affairs Section. JDF Engineer Corps built the foundation and completed the assembly of the building.

Comment: JDFCG have shown determination, and ingenuity in the pursuit of their maritime interdiction mandate. They have completed repairs to vessels on a shoestring and put them back into service in record time. The quick action to put this new station into operation speaks volumes for the JDFCG's commitment to its law enforcement mission. The presence of the JDF Chief of Staff and the JCF Commissioner signals perhaps a renewed effort to cooperate in the mutual interest of Jamaica. Post is optimistic about the results this joint law enforcement effort can achieve. End comment.

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